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A Century of Grace

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St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Muncieville, Indiana

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**A CENTURY
OF GRACE**

1849

1949

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Centennial Hymn

*With songs of praise we come before Thee,
Our God, Thou Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
With grateful hearts we all adore Thee,
For Thou hast blessed us to the uttermost.
We laud Thy wondrous works as we retrace
A hundred years of mercy, love, and grace.*

*A frontier one still called this region
When our beloved Church was founded here.
Though cares and trials then seemed legion,
The founders Thou didst gird with strength and cheer.
And all ensuing years up to this day
Thy goodness showered gifts upon life's way.*

*Our fathers found Thy Word unfailing,
In which Thy love for sinners is revealed.
Though devil, world, and flesh assailing,
Yet they believed; for, with Thy Spirit sealed,
They knew Thy saving Truth, which made them free—
In Christ, Thy Son, their Savior, led to Thee.*

*And unto us has come Thy blessing
That in our midst Thy Gospel still is heard.
When tried or grieved, when sin confessing,
Our hearts find hope and comfort in Thy Word.
For by this means of grace all is restored
Thy mercy wrought for us in Christ, our Lord.*

*Enlightened by Thy Revelation,
Enriched in knowledge and all utterance,
We look to Christ for our salvation,
Secured by Him for our inheritance.
Thus we await the coming of Thy Son
To crown with glory what is here begun.*

*O God, Thy love in Christ exalting,
With humble hearts we pray Thee to abide!
Thy gracious promise, never halting,
Assures us Thou wilt also hence provide.
Thy Holy Spirit lead us all our days
And keep us, yea, all Christians, in Thy ways! Amen.*

(The above poem is from the pen of Prof. Ernest E. Lewerenz, Concordia College, Fort Wayne, and is used with his permission.
The tune is "Jehovah, let me now adore Thee")

In Gratitude to God

we humbly dedicate this booklet

To the rugged pioneers, the founders of our congregation, who a hundred and more years ago left Europe and came to these United States of America—the haven of civil and religious freedom—to establish new homes in the then-existing swamplands and primeval forests of Indiana and, in particular, here to worship and serve the true God on the basis of His revealed Word and in accordance with the principles of the Lutheran Reformation;

To the faithful pastors and teachers who, by the grace of God, in good and evil days labored diligently and earnestly, devotedly and prayerfully, cheerfully and successfully to feed the flock of Christ in church and school and who, during a hundred years, by word and example, endeavored to provide spiritual leadership to the immortal souls entrusted to their care, not forgetting to invoke upon them divine blessings;

To the men and women of our congregation today who, following in the footsteps of their godfearing parents and friends of yesteryear, are carrying on the work of the Lord in these difficult and troubled times with commendable devotion, consecration and zeal, proclaiming the old Gospel of salvation alone by God's grace through faith in Christ by new and quicker methods and means in various parts of the world, and simultaneously intensifying and redoubling their efforts to establish and enlarge the kingdom of God in their own midst,—to the glory of God and the salvation of blood-bought souls.

SOLA SCRIPTURA

SOLA GRATIA

SOLA FIDES

Henry W. Hartenberger

FOREWORD

By the unmerited grace and goodness of God Saint John's Ev. Lutheran Church at "Flatrock", Route 2, Monroeville, Indiana, this year is privileged to commemorate the one-hundredth jubilee of the founding of the congregation and its Christian day school, as well as the thirty-fifth anniversary of its present parish school building and the seventieth year since the present church edifice was begun to be built. Hence we feel constrained to exclaim with the Psalmist: *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits (Psalm 103:2). 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake' (Psalm 115, 1).*

It is altogether fitting and proper that, having reached these milestones, we should take due notice and give evidence of our appreciation and gratitude to the Lord of the Church for the many and great blessings which He has bestowed upon Flatrock. In various ways such expressions of praise and gratitude have been ascending heavenward during past weeks and months; however, we would yet publicly express our joy and thankfulness by the observance of special centennial services beginning on Sunday, October 2nd, and the publication of this 100th anniversary booklet. The purpose of such a booklet—aside from acknowledging the undeserved favors and benedictions of the Triune God—is to record a few of the most important items of the congregation's history before they are forgotten or lost, and also to encourage the present and succeeding generations of Flatrockers *"to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."* (1 Cor. 15:58).

Unfortunately, we cannot give a complete and well-rounded history of the congregation and its activities because important documents and records are missing. *No trace of the minutes of the congregational meetings held from 1858 to 1905 has been found. Moreover, it appears that no historical booklets were published on the occasion of the congregation's golden and diamond jubilees. Only the statistics of official acts, such as baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials and Communion attendance, are still available (though not always

legible due to faded ink) in fairly complete form. Due to these regrettable circumstances we have labored under a severe handicap in trying to publish an acceptable anniversary booklet. In addition to the careful reading of all available records and minutes of the congregation and its organizations, the editor of this booklet has diligently sought to obtain valuable information by consulting some of our oldest members concerning past events. A collection of interesting facts was gathered in this manner, and we are indebted for them particularly to 94-year old "Grandma" (Mrs. Wm.) Molthan, whose remarkably keen memory rendered us invaluable service, as well as to the assistance we received with interviews with Messrs. Henry Grotirian and T. John Fackler. In keeping with historical accuracy, we have included only such information which we considered reliable, preferring to withhold from publication everything which could not be verified beyond all reasonable doubt. Quite naturally, more mention is made of events in recent years because more information concerning them was available, particularly also in the ten volumes of the weekly church bulletins. It should also be added that many items of interest could not be included without unduly enlarging this booklet. We preferred to illustrate the booklet with many pictures of "ancient" and modern times, for it has been said quite correctly that "one good picture is worth a thousand words."

Sincere acknowledgment is hereby given also to the following: To Franklin Press, Ft. Wayne, and Stafford Engraving Co., Wheaton, Ill., who rendered prompt and efficient service; to Barner Studio of Ft. Wayne, which took five of the larger-group photos and made new copies of half a dozen faded photographs of long ago; particularly also to Wade Tyler, our "unofficial" photographer, and his plane pilot for the aerial pictures, viz., Hilbert Holle (both of these members donated their time, labor, and equipment and refused any remuneration); to Trinity Lutheran Congregation of Elkhart, Ind., for the use of two fine engravings, namely the cross-and-open-Bible-design on the cover and the large cloud-and-water-scene on the last page; finally, to all who by the loan of pictures for engravings or in any other manner contributed anything toward the publication of "A CENTURY OF GRACE". Sincere thanks to one and all!

H. W. H.

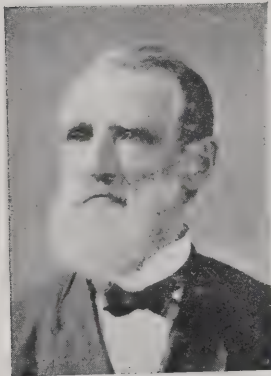
* Minutes from 1866-1906 were found after booklet was in print. A comparison with our copy revealed no real discrepancies. — EDITOR

EARLY HISTORICAL EVENTS AT ST. JOHN'S

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."—Deuteronomy 32:7

"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."—Proverbs 22:28

TWO days of a hundred years ago stand out prominently in the early history of our congregation, namely *September 10th* and *October 1st*. That September day is memorable as the date when our pioneering fathers assembled in meeting and decided to found a congregation, and the second date mentioned above is significant because on that day the resolution was to become a reality, and the new congregation came into actual existence.



Rev. F. W. Husmann

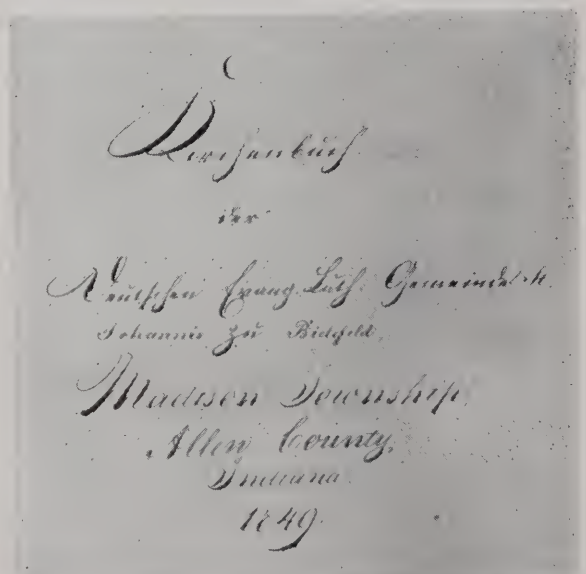
However, before details and particulars are set forth concerning what happened on September 10 and October 1, an earlier date deserves mention. In the diary of the Reverend Fred W. Husmann, founder of our Flatrock Church (as also of Emmanuel at Soest, St. John's at Bingen, and St. Peter's at Fuelling), there appears this entry: "Sunday, Jan. 3, 1847: Today I preached in the German settlement at Jacob Frey, 5 miles east of Marion Twp. This settlement is part of St. John's." We have culled this quotation from the centennial booklet of our sister congregation at Bingen. Let's look at the words again. We note that the date is almost three years before our congregation was founded. The Jacob Frey home, which Pastor Husmann described as being five miles east of his own residence at Soest and in a settlement which was a part of St. John's (at Bingen), is the old Burkamp place, about two miles east of our present church property. Jacob Frey came to the United States from Germany in June, 1839, and was one of the charter members of our St. John's Congregation. Hence it seems certain that the very first service conducted by a Lutheran pastor in our Flatrock midst was held, as noted in the diary, in a private home occupied at that time by the Jacob Frey family.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1849

Whether Pastor Husmann occasionally conducted additional preaching services in the homes of Lutheran settlers in this community, cannot be determined; however it appears doubtful, since our people held membership at St. John's (Bingen). To anyone who can visualize traveling conditions a century ago over trails leading through forests and swampland, it is not surprising that the desire soon arose to found a separate congregation in

order to have religious services and Christian schooling for their children closer at hand. Heeding such requests, Pastor Husmann called a meeting for the purpose of discussing the founding of a separate congregation. The date set was September 10, and on that day the heads of half a dozen families met with the pastor in the home of Juergen (George) Brouwer to discuss the matter of organization. Those present on that historic occasion in addition to the pastor and the host were: Conrad Frey, Carl Wiebke, Ludwig Hoffmeier, Fred Hillman, William Aumann, and F. W. Molthan.—A word about the host and the place of meeting: Juergen Brouwer (his name is usually spelled Brauer in the church records) was the father of Mrs. Wm. Molthan, and the Brouwer family hailed from Holland; Mrs. Brouwer's maiden name was ~~Frey, Carl, Wiebke, Ludwig, Hoffmeier~~, Fred George, Jacob, Martin, and Henry. The Brouwer home at that time was about a quarter mile east of our present church, between the present Paul Herderhorst and Eric Bleeke farms, now farmed by Gus Franke. The present Bleeke place at that time belonged to Conrad Frey.

At the above meeting, preliminary discussion centered on the following: Pastor Husmann, who was now serving as the first secretary of the recently-organized Missouri Synod in addition to devoting full time to his ministerial duties at three congregations, announced that on October 1 his assistant, Candidate J. A. Fritze, a student at the Fort Wayne seminary, would be placed in full



Title Page of First Church Record Book

charge of the Bingen Congregation (the implication being that Husmann could then give more attention to the group of Lutherans in Madison Twp. at Flatrock); furthermore, since the men assembled at the present meeting earnestly desired to have a church and school established in their midst; and since the church site newly acquired for the building of a church at Bingen was at a considerable distance for the local people—it would indeed be advisable to branch off from the Bingen Church and found a separate organization. The result of the meeting was the adoption by unanimous vote of the following resolutions: That the men present, together with their families, as of

OCTOBER 1, 1849

constitute a separate congregation which was to be known as the "St. John's Ev. Lutheran Congregation of Madison Township, Allen County, Indiana," and that as such it become immediately a member of the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. Furthermore it was resolved that the Rev. Mr. Husmann be retained as the pastor of the new congregation, preaching every three or four weeks and teaching school here at least one day a week, necessary exceptions being taken into consideration. Finally, it was agreed that the congregation purchase of Carl Wiebke the ten-acre tract east of his home for \$30, toward which sum every head of a family was to contribute three dollars. The building of a church was discussed, but no definite decision was reached. The election of officers was postponed until the congregation would come into actual existance on October 1, at which time also the drawing up of a Constitution and By-Laws would get underway.

Following the minutes of the first meeting, Pastor Husmann has added the following notations in the church record-book: The first regular service of the newly-organized congregation was conducted by him (the home where the service was held is not mentioned; it may very well have been a log house which belonged to Mr. Brouwer, but which was not being used as a residence. This building was used for worship purposes for several years before a church was built; many years later this old log building was destroyed by fire)—the first service was held on Sunday, Oct. 21, 1849, following which the pastor read to the assembled congregation the resolutions which had been adopted at the Brouwer home on Sept. 10th. Several heads of families, not present at the first meeting, were asked whether they approved of the resolutions and desired to become members. Jacob Frey, Sr., and Philip Neff gave their approval and were received into membership. At the conclusion of the service held on Nov. 11th Jacob Marquard was received into membership and the first officers of the congregation were elected, namely: Conrad Frey, elder; Carl Wiebke, deacon; and Philip Neff, trustee.

Those who may be regarded as charter members of this congregation are the first twelve names

listed on the photostatic copy, which is printed hereabouts, namely: William Aumann, Juergen Brouwer, Henry Franke, Jacob Frey, Sr., Conrad Frey, Fred Hillmann, Ludwig Hoffmeier, William Moldthan, Philip Neff, Carl Wiebke, Jacob Marquard, and William Kruse. (The pastor, of course, also held membership). Names of such who joined as members during the next few years include: Fred Grottrian, Fred Klenke, Robert Duenger, John Lenker, Christian Wiegmann, Fred Grottrian, Jr., Henry Wiebke, and Martin Frey. All these had become members by 1858.

Charter Members

TWO YEARS AFTER ORGANIZATION

In the early days, meetings of the voters' assembly were few and far between. Two years passed by before another business meeting of the congregation was held. From the minutes of that meeting, held October 25, 1851, we learn that Pastor Husmann urged that new officers be elected and that a system of conducting bi-annual elections be followed. That was done, and the election resulted in the choice of Carl Wiebke, elder; William Aumann, deacon; and William Moldthan, trustee. (The pastor served as secretary; no treasurer was named since all funds were handled by the elder and trustee).

The pastor's plea to introduce and use the new Lutheran hymnals published by a St. Louis congregation was heeded... The matter of getting on with the building of a log church was discussed. It appears that a quantity of logs had already been cut for that purpose, for in the minutes mention is made of the fear expressed by some that further delay in building might cause the logs to rot. It was thereupon decided to get the roof on immediately and to cover both gables with weather boards. The job was given to Carl Wiebke for a consideration of \$18 and the deadline for the completion of the project was set as "no later than Christmas."

For some unknown reason the completion of the church building was delayed another two years. Perhaps there were good reasons for the delay; on

the other hand, it may have resulted from the same hesitancy or slowness in such matters which also today is occasionally noticed in rural congregations in a greater measure than in most city churches. At any rate, construction of the church was not completed until the spring of 1853, and on Pentecost Sunday of that year, May 15, the church was dedicated to the service of the Triune God.

THE FIRST CHURCH

Unfortunately, we have neither a picture nor the exact dimensions of the first church. Some of our older members remember it as a log building (later plastered and siding was added), without a bell, its double front door facing east. It stood on the present cemetery site, the front door being just about where the cemetery gate is now. The first church contained a reed organ which was played by Candidate Ripling and in later years also by the wife of Pastor Karrer. The building served also as a parochial school classroom for about 25 years. Since the church was used for almost thirty years, it must have been a good-sized building; for by 1881 the congregation numbered 240 baptized souls. At the time of its dedication the church was undoubtedly regarded as a large structure, since the membership was small.

This may be a good place to speak about the size of the congregation a century ago. Statistics which were made available to us through the kind co-operation of the Rev. Armin Schroeder, Synod's statistician in the St. Louis office, leave us in the dark regarding the original membership of our congregation; that is due to the practice in those days of reporting figures to the statistician for the whole parish served by the pastor without indicating what the figures were for separate congregations in the parish. In 1849 Pastor Husmann's parish numbered a total of 320 baptized souls, but no indication is given how many of these lived at Flatrock. However, our own Vol. I of the Church Records contains a family register listing the names of all members of the congregation beginning with the year 1850. A bit of figuring and analyzing of that list was done by the writer. Our conclusion is this: When the congregation came into existence on Oct. 1, 1849, it appears from the list of families (pg. 15 ff), that it comprised: 27 communicants, viz., eleven men, fourteen women; one confirmed boy; and one confirmed girl. Among the children were 19 unconfirmed boys and 16 unconfirmed girls. That would give us a grand total of 62 baptized souls.

The first parsonage was likewise a log building. It stood just north of the present poultry-shed and today would receive some shade from the large walnut tree. It had two rooms and an unfinished upstairs, faced east, and there was a porch on the northeast corner. Lengthwise it stood in a north-south direction. Candidate Ripling, who lived at Soest, had some of his belongings stored in the building, but the Rev. H. G. Bauer was the first

pastor to occupy the old parsonage. The log parsonage was probably built around 1860. The present cemetery driveway at that time was the road which led to the parsonage and, a hundred yards farther west, directly to the church.

In the minutes of the meeting held in December, 1854, a report was made informing the congregation that certain legal requirements had been complied with in order that all three church officers would be recognized as trustees of the congregation (no doubt also in the matter of the transfer of land as church property). Accordingly, a notice was inserted ten days in advance of the election in the *Ft. Wayne News-Sentinel* and another was tacked to the church door. The financial report for 1854 showed total receipts of \$42.67 and expenditures of \$39.35, leaving a balance of \$3.32 in the treasuries. Dating from that time also is the faded and partly-torn

WARRANTY DEED OF SALE

(Below is a copy of the original warranty deed as it was recorded in 1854 following the sale of ten acres to the young congregation for use as its church property.)

THIS INDENTURE, Made this twenty-sixth day of December, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four between Charles Wiebke & Sophie Wiebke, his wife, of the County of Allen, and State of Indiana, of the first part; and William Aumann, Philip Neff & Henry Franke, Trustees for the German Ev. Lutheran Congregation of Madison Township, of the County of Allen and State of Indiana of the second part: WITNESSETH, that said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of *Thirty Dollars*, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged by the said party of the first part, hath granted, bargained, sold and conveyed, and by these presents doth grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said party of the second part, their successors forever, all the following described premises, to wit: A part of the North East quarter of the South West quarter of Section seventeen (17) T. P. 29 north of Range 14 East, commencing at a post on the half section line 8 chains and 21 links further south than the centre-post of said Section. Thence west 8 chains and fifty (50) links to a post; thence south 11 chains and 77 links to a post; thence east 8 chains and 50 links parallel with the line on the north side of said lot; thence north parallel with the line on the west side to the place of beginning, containing *Ten (10) Acres*—

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above described premises hereby sold and conveyed unto the said party of the second part, their successors and assigns forever, together with all the hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining, and all the rents, profits, and reversions of the same, to the use, benefit and behoof of said congregation. And the said party of the first part, for themselves, their heirs, executors, and administrators, hereby covenant to and with the said

party of the second part, their successors and assigns, that they, the said party of the first part, are the lawful owners of the said premises, and have good right, full power, and lawful authority, to sell and convey the same in manner aforesaid—that the same are free from all incumbrances—and that they, the said party of the first part, will FOREVER WARRANT AND DEFEND the same against the claim or claims of all and every person or persons whatsoever.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the said Charles Wiebke & Sophie Wiebke his wife have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of

Peter Eckley (Justice of the Peace)

Juergen Brouwer

Carl Wiebke

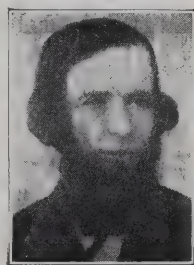
Sophie Wiebke

The minutes of the voters' meeting held Dec. 1, 1858, which report the reception of four voting members and the action taken to persuade delinquent contributors to improve the financial situation of the congregation, are the last that were recorded in the original volume of the church records. As we noted in the Foreward, the minutes cannot be found of voters' meetings held from 1858 to 1906. Fortunately, however, we have some reliable information to fill in the gaps here and there, particularly after Flatrock had its own resident pastors.

CHANGE OF PASTORS

When Pastor Husmann accepted a call to South Euclid, Ohio, in 1863, his successor was the *Rev.*

Phil. Fleischmann, a former director of the Normal Training Department of the Seminary in Fort Wayne. Like his predecessor, Pastor Fleischmann resided at Soest and from there served also our St. John's Congregation until 1866. Some years later he accepted a call to Kendallville, Ind., and served St. John's there until his death.



Rev. P. Fleischmann
1864-1866

The next pastor at "Bielefeld," as this locality was called in those early years, was *Pastor H. B.*

Bauer. (On good authority we have learned that Bielefeld was the name of the place in Germany, where some of the charter members lived before emigrating to America. They applied the old hometown name to their new settlement in Indiana. However, when others objected to that designation, the settlement and congregation gradually became known by the name "Flatrock"—this name being derived from the irrigation ditch which runs through this community.) Pastor Bauer who came



Rev. H. G. Bauer (1866-1871)
and Wife

here in July from Minden, near Indianapolis, served for five years, from 1866 to 1871. His second wife was from Flatrock; her maiden name was Koenemann. She was a sister of Mrs. Krug and of Rudy and Oscar Koenemann's grandfather. We were fortunate in obtaining a picture for use in this booklet of both Pastor and Mrs. Bauer. The 81-year old son of the Rev. Bauer attended our church services on a Sunday last July.

During the next decade the Flatrock flock was shepherded by the Rev. John Peter Karrer. He was born in Germany on March 17, 1838, and came to our country in 1865 to complete his theological training at our St. Louis Seminary. Before coming to Monroeville in the fall of 1871 he served as pastor of several congregations at Napoleon, Ohio. He married Katherine Fackler, a sister of Michael J. Fackler who, for many years, was secretary of our congregation. Mrs. Karrer served as church organist in the old log church; she was buried in our cemetery.

It was toward the end of Rev. Karrer's pastorate when our present church was built. The foundation for the new structure was laid in 1879 or perhaps a bit sooner, but due to disagreement among the members over the location of the new house of God—some wanted it placed about a mile southeast of here—the building was not completed until late in 1881, being dedicated in December of that year. We have unearthed a few interesting details pertaining to the erection of the church. Michael J. Fackler, who had been an apprenticed architect in Germany before coming to America, drew the plans for the structure (he also furnished the blueprints for the St. Peter's Church at Fuelling Settlement). The contractor was a Mr. Breimeyer of Ft. Wayne, whose son Fred is still residing there. The Church Building Committee consisted of Michael



Photo Taken about Sixty Years Ago

Fackler, Charles Grotrian, and Philip Neff. Henry Wiebke, also a member of the congregation and a carpenter of sorts, was the local overseer of the project. The bricks of the building were made in the brick-kiln which was located at the Wiebke place, less than a quarter mile northwest of the church. William Grotrian, the father of Henry Grotrian, placed the cross on the steeple.

(It may be well to insert here that all our efforts to find a photo of Pastor Karrer were in vain.)



Rev. G. Rosenwinkel
1881-1884

In September, 1881, a new pastor had been installed as successor to the Rev. Mr. Karrer, namely Pastor *Gustav Rosenwinkel*. The latter was born in Germany in 1850. As a lad of five years he accompanied his parents on the voyage to America; however, his parents died on the ship and the young boy was given into the care of a young couple by the name of Rosenwinkel, who reared him in their home near Addison, Ill., and enabled him to prepare for the holy ministry. Pastor Rosenwinkel was married to Catherine Katt of Ft. Wayne, the ceremony being performed by Dr. Sihler in St. Paul's Church. He was married twice. A son Walter in Ft. Wayne, as well as two sons in Minnesota (one a pastor, the other a Lutheran teacher) are still living, and a daughter lives in Gary, Ind. During his pastorate at Flatrock, Pastor Rosenwinkel was in poor health and his wife was ill, consequently he remained here as pastor only about three years. However, during

his short pastorate the "old" brick school was built, approximately on the same spot where the present school now stands. It seems that the school was built in 1883 or 1884, thus serving the cause of Christian education for three decades. Pastor Rosenwinkel held a charge in Chicago after leaving here; he was compelled to resign from office for several years to regain his health in Florida; his last charge was near St. Paul, Minn., where he died in 1901 of a cancer.

The present parsonage was built about 1886, during the pastorate of Rev. *George T. Gotsch*. Henry Grotrian's father supervised its construction and his uncle, Henry Wiebke, did the carpenter work. They built well, for it is still used today after being improved and remodeled several times.



Rev. G. T. Gotsch
1884-1895

Pastor Gotsch was born 1825 in Leipzig, Germany, hence he was about 60 years old when he came to our congregation. For eleven years he served faithfully in church and school, finally retiring from office in 1895 and soon thereafter entering into the rest of the children of God.

He was succeeded by the pastor who served this congregation for a longer period of time—17 years—than any other called servant of the Word, namely Pastor *C. W. Diederich*. Because of his long service and also because the members of his family are remembered by many of our people, we are publishing the family's picture rather than an individual picture of the former pastor. The Rev. Mr. Diederich came to Flatrock from Iowa. Late in December, 1912, he accepted a call to Michigan. He resided in Fort Wayne for a time following his retirement from office. On the occasion of our congregation's Diamond Jubilee in 1924 he was one of the anniversary speakers. He departed this life in 1926.

Concerning other called servants of the Word who served our congregation in church and school, reference is made elsewhere in this booklet both by word and picture.



First School, 1884-1914



Rev. C. W. Diederich (1895-1913)
and Family



Rev. S. Hassold
1913-1919



Rev. Aug. Gerken
1919-1929



Rev. W. Aker
1929-1938

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."—Hebrews 13:7



Rev. H. W. Hartenberger
Pastor since 1938

GROWTH OF ST. JOHN

Compiled from the annual parochial reports published by Synod, except figures for 1849.
Number of communicant members not given in early years.

Year	Pastor	Souls	Communicants	Communed	School Pupils	CONTRIBUTIONS	
						Outside P.	Home P.
1849	Husmann	62	27	13	?		
1869	Bauer	184	?	305	39	NO FINANCE	
1879	Karrer	244	?	209	32	REPORTS LISTED	
1889	Gotsch	243	139	337	44	UNTIL 1918	
1899	Diederich	280	175	461	56		
1909	Diederich	285	200	488	40		
1913	Hassold	312	223	476	46		
1919	Gerken	320	220	593	54	\$ 800	\$ 1800
1924	Gerken	335	227	601	67	1,500	3,029
1929	Aker	300	230	623	47	1,361	3,235
1934	Aker	334	250	650	42	1,550	3,109
1939	Hartenberger	344	264	731	46	2,030	4,334
1944	Hartenberger	388	284	897	47	3,828	5,877
1948	Hartenberger	410	292	1,095	62	5,963	12,732
Aug. 1, 1949	Hartenberger	425	300				

A Prayer for Our Pastor

We pray Thee, Lord, Thy servant bless and keep,
For Thou hast called on him to feed Thy sheep.
Give strength and courage for the task ahead,
And on his work Thy fullest blessings shed.

In hours of grief and doubt his comfort be,
That he with trusting heart seek help from Thee.
When paths are rough and steep, be Thou his Guide,
Make known to him that Thou art at his side.

May we, Thy flock, with prayer his work uphold
And help to bring lost sheep into the fold.
Our hearts keep humble—only trusting thee—
And we shall praise Thee now and to eternity. Amen.

ADELA KRETZMANN WEBER

Canton, Ohio



"Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."—2 Timothy 4:2

The Pastor

He is an humble man of common sod,
Fashioned as all men are, out of earth's clay—
A saintlike messenger sent here by God
To light men's paths and show them heaven's way.
When he starts a sermon, he looks up high
And opens wide his heart to let thoughts in,
Determined he, with homely words, will try
To help God win the lean souls steeped in sin.
He weaves his simple words so men can see
How futile it is for them just to toil
For scanty sustenance and jewelry
And clothes and gold which moth and rust despoil.
Oh, he knows how mortal and frail men are,
Who, like the grass, wither away and die;
Their lives on earth so like a shooting star
Which casts its brilliance briefly o'er the sky.
And so he strives to give them all the key
To paradise and immortality!

CARL WINIFRED SNYDER

Chicago Tribune
May 26, 1946

A Pastor's Prayer

Thee alone, my precious Savior,
Let me serve while here I live;
Sinful though I be, yet ever
May Thy matchless grace and favor
Daily benedictions give.

Never let the world offend me
To deny Thee, Christ, my Lord;
When it rages, oh, befriend me,
Thy sweet peace and comfort send me,
As I trust Thy holy Word.

Stand by me when I confess Thee,
Make my speech a living stream;
Let me hold Thee and possess Thee;
Though afflicted, may I bless Thee
As the Mighty to redeem.

Jesus, with my flock abiding,
Shepherd it from heaven above;
Always in Thy truth confiding,
Let it follow Thy sure guiding,
As Thine own in hope and love.

Knit our souls in pure affection,
Savior, help us graciously;
At the final resurrection,
Saved by grace, in blest perfection,
Grant life's crown to them and me.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER, Tr.

FLATROCK'S MARCH OF TIME

(Items of interest culled chiefly from minutes of meetings)
1906 - 1949

1906—The pastor's annual salary was set at \$600 . . . Repairs were made on the church totalling \$819.58.

1907—It was decided to extend the cemetery to the south, rather than to the north. Accordingly, 100 feet were added south of the old fence.

In a meeting held on March 17 it was resolved to call a school teacher, who should receive a salary of \$350 per year . . . Three weeks later in a special meeting it was resolved to call one of the candidates about to graduate from the normal school at Addison, Ill. It was to be emphasized that the teacher should teach five days per week and serve as church organist. . . . Candidate *Wm. F. Toensing* received the call and was ordained and installed on September 2.

1908—A teacher's dwelling was erected. The contract was awarded to a Mr. Lindemann for the sum of \$1,940. By the end of the following year payment had been made in full for the new teacherage.

1910—A special meeting was called which decided to erect a new wire fence north of the cemetery drive-way. The fence was to be set back from the road to provide more room for hitching posts. Moreover, four rods of 4 inch tiles were to be laid so that the horses need not stand tied in water-puddles.

1911—A pipe organ (Hinners two-manual, tracker action) was purchased for about \$1,100. Electric motor and blower were added in later years.

The question of following Central standard time or sun time was solved by moving clocks twenty minutes ahead of standard time.

1912—What appears to have been the first school picnic was held on June 23 of this year, at which time the school term ended.

—After declining several other calls, *Pastor Diederich* requested the congregation in a special meeting held on Dec. 22d to grant him a release. Reluctantly this request was granted and *Pastor C. W. Rodenbeck* of Soest was named vacancy pastor. *Pastor Diederich* remained at Flatrock until about the middle of January.

1913—On February 2, a call was extended to *Pastor Stephen Hassold* of Corunna, Ind. He accepted and was installed on the second Sunday after Easter. Pastors *Dornseif* and *Rodenbeck* were invited to assist at the installation. Mr.

Phil. Neff agreed to transport the new pastor's horse to Flatrock.

The resolution to build a *new school* was adopted in a meeting held August 3d. The following were named to the Building Committee: *William Melcher*, *Ernst Koenemann*, *Fred Hegerfeld, Jr.*, *Herman Franke* and *John Selking*. Architect *Hoffman* of Decatur was employed and after a number of extra meetings had been held, the lowest bid (\$6,573.00) made by a Decatur firm was accepted. (Actual cost came to \$6,951.97.)

At the congregation's urgent request, *Teacher Toensing* declined a call to Chicago.

1914—On Sunday afternoon, Sept. 27th, the new brick school was formally dedicated to the service of God. The festival speaker was *Prof. C. Purzner*. Text was Eph. 6, 4. The children of the school and a male quartet rendered special music. The day's offerings were for the benefit of the new school.

A steam heating system was installed in the school at a cost of \$636.70, the contract for which was let in November. The debt on the school had been liquidated by September of the following year.

1915—The congregation heeded the request to conduct a service in the English language once a month on Sunday afternoon. (Beginning April, 1920, the English service was held on a Sunday morning). Permission was granted to purchase a few English hymnals.

Shade trees were planted in the school yard.

1917—Permission was granted the choir to install a bowling alley in the school basement. . . . All buildings of the congregation were equipped with lightning-rods.

Heeding the request of the Government, the congregation agreed to use "daylight-saving" time during the war period. The congregation purchased a war bond and urged its members to do likewise. . . . The use of the German language in school was discontinued temporarily, namely until November, 1919.

1918—Towards the end of the year, school was closed for several weeks due to the influenza epidemic.

1919—Because of advancing age and failing health, *Pastor Hassold* pleaded with the congregation to accept his resignation. Regretfully the request was granted. *Pastor Hassold* served the

congregation until his son, Prof. Ernest Has-sold, had been named vacancy pastor.

A "Soldiers' Home-Coming" service was held on Sunday morning, Oct. 26, to honor the returned servicemen and to thank God for their gracious protection. Those who served under the flag of our country in World War I were: Fred W. Bohnke, Gustav David, Charles Franke, Eli Hoffman, Walter Hoffman, Henry Molthan, William Molthan, Jacob Neff, Carl Messerschmidt, Martin Quandt. Of these, all returned home safely except Carl Messerschmidt, who died of the "flu" while in camp.

The Rev. August Gerken, of Leduc, Alberta, Canada, was installed as pastor here on Sunday, Dec. 2. Following the induction service a congregational dinner was served in school to welcome the new pastor and his family.

1920—One hour of religious instruction in English per week was added to the school curriculum.

1921—A new State law required all children to attend school until the age of 16 years. Our congregation therefore resolved to heed the pastor's suggestion that the 8th grade be added, and Pastor Gerken agreed to assist with teaching on condition that his preaching load be lightened and he be excused from all but sick visits.

Teacher Toensing accepted the call to Bethlehem Congregation, St. Louis, Mo., after it had been sent to him for the second time. The pastor took over the school duties, and T. John Fackler was appointed to serve as temporary secretary of the voters' assembly.

Fred W. Uffelman was called as the new teacher, accepted, and was duly installed. The pastor continued to assist in school by teaching in the morning.

1922—Permission was given the Young People's Society to affiliate with the Walther League.

1923—The congregation voted to have but one treasurer to handle all monies. Heretofore the



Early Picture of Walther Leaguers

system of having separate treasurers for the various funds of the congregation had been in vogue.

Our congregation participated in the synod-wide collection for our colleges and seminaries. Our members pledged a sum exceeding \$2,400.

By its vote on Dec. 16th our congregation became a charter member of the Lutheran Missionary Association of Ft. Wayne and Vicinity and has helped to carry on institutional and Negro mission work through this agency to the present time.



Home-made Stage for Walther League Plays

1924—The 75th anniversary of our congregation's founding was observed in three special services of thanksgiving held on Sunday, September 14. Festival speakers were Pastors C. W. Rodenbeck, C. W. Diederich (the only former pastor still living at that time) and E. Husmann. The committee in charge of the jubilee arrangements included Phillip Neff, Fred Selking and Fred Hockemeyer. Members and visiting friends were served a bountiful dinner. It is interesting to note that the anniversary offerings were designated either for church repairs or *the building of a new church*. At that time the congregation had 95 voting members, 230 communicants and 340 baptized souls. The school enrollment stood at 70 pupils.

1925—Teacher F. W. Uffelman (called for the second time) accepts call to Emmaus, Ft. Wayne. He was succeeded by Mr. *Theodore Kuhdart*. The latter served only a year.

1926—Informed of the death of Pastor Diederich, the congregation gave a memorial wreath of \$25 for City Missions.

1927—Mr. *Oscar Rausch* was installed as the new teacher.

1929—Pastor Gerken accepted call to Marysville, Ohio. His successor in office was *William Aker*.

1930—At the suggestion of the Ladies' Aid and assisted by the Walther League, the congregation installed electricity in church, school and both residences.

—Ladies Aid had church interior re-decorated. The English liturgy was introduced in church services.

1931—Resolution was adopted to observe the 50th anniversary of church building on September 20th.

1933—The practice of furnishing free fuel to pastor and teacher was discontinued.

1936—Congregation purchased an official seal.... The ladies were granted permission to affiliate with the Lutheran Women's Endeavor (now called Lutheran Women's Missionary League) Double-pocket monthly contribution envelopes were introduced.

1937—Teacher O. P. Rausch resigned to continue his studies at Indiana University. On June 20th Mr. *Robert M. Schumann* was installed as the new teacher.

1938—Pastor William Aker died following surgery on Sept. 19th.... Meetings of the voters' assembly now conducted in English. Visitor Karl Wyneken installed the new pastor, the Rev. *Henry W. Hartenberger* of Hooker, Okla., on November 27th. A dinner and reception followed the service.



Group of Ladies' Aid Members, 1931

1939—An English Constitution and By-Laws was drawn up and the German version was revised.... A weekly church bulletin, **THE FLATROCK REMINDER**, was begun on Pentecost Sunday.... Our congregation participated in the Saxon centennial celebration observance of Synod.

On October 22 the 90th anniversary of our congregation and the 25th anniversary of the new school building were observed in special services. Guest speakers were Pastors August Gerken and Edwin David, and Mr. Wm. F. Toensing was guest organist. The ladies served 1,025 at a chicken dinner. The offerings were for needed church improvements, among which was a new heating plant in school (boiler and stoker) installed the next month at a cost of about \$1,100.



Flatrock's Famous Team of the 1920's

On the night of Dec. 21st a chimney fire in church was discovered and extinguished without causing much damage.

1940—An Activities Committee was elected. First members were Walter Melcher, Edgar Hockemeyer and Oscar Koenemann.... A Cradle Roll Department was added to Sunday School, Mrs. Martin Hockemeyer serving as first superintendent.... The first annual Roll Call and Confirmation Reunion service was held on Palm Sunday eve sponsored by the Walther League.... The Walther League also had a Mother's Day program at Hoagland gym.

1941—Congregation adopted Synod's Pension Plan for its workers.... In February, Paul Herderhorst became the first of congregation's young men to be called to serve with the armed forces.... Both residences were modernized at a cost of \$1,825.... Synod's new Hymnal was adopted.... The U. S. and church flags were placed in church.... Flatrock reached the finals in State W. L. Basketball Tournament, losing out to Concordia 45-42.... Walls in church and school braced with metal rods. Resolved to have "double-headers" on festival days and to dispense with services on second holidays.

1942—German services on English Communion Sundays were dropped.... Contract was awarded to Beck Plumbing & Heating Co. (\$1,842) for installation of steam heating system in church.... Interior of church was redecorated, mothers' room added, floors sanded, chimneys taken down, etc.... An Adult Bible Class was organized to meet on Sunday nights, but was discontinued in 1944. Our congregation was host to Circuit meeting at which District President W. F. Lichtsinn was the chief speaker.... The pastor began 6-year term as editor of District Supplement.

1943—Altar and pulpit covers in all liturgical colors were donated by the Ladies' Aid.... New cement sidewalk laid from parsonage to road.

The rental system for some school textbooks was adopted and first special service was held in church for our 8th grade graduates with awarding of diplomas and Lutheran school pins.

1944—Teacher R. M. Schumann's resignation was accepted. W. J. Gernand, District Superintendent of Schools, taught during vacancy, Mrs. Hartenberger served as organist, and Mr. Delmer Franke was elected temporary secretary of congregation. . . . Mr. W. J. Ehlen of Sioux City, Iowa, was installed as the new teacher on June 11. A basket dinner and food shower reception followed the induction service. . . . The 20th wedding anniversary of Pastor and Mrs. Hartenberger was observed with a special service and social evening. . . . Evergreens and other shrubbery planted at both residences. . . . New furnace with blower and a sump pump were installed in teacherage.

1945—Congregation surprised Mr. & Mrs. Ehlen on the occasion of their 15th wedding anniversary. Delicious meal, music, speeches, gifts! . . . It was resolved to join with other congregations of Circuit to conduct joint 8th grade graduation services honoring graduates of our respective parish schools. . . . Permission was granted for members of both sexes to approach Lord's Table together when communing. . . . On May 8th a special service of thanksgiving was held (V-E Day) to thank God for the termination of the war in Europe. We took part in the special Peace Thank-offering of Synod by giving \$3,100. . . . On V-J



Class of 1912. First Confirmation Group to Have Formal Class Photo Taken

Day, August 15th, a special service was held to show our gratitude for the end of World War II. Certificates of Recognition for loyal service to God and country were awarded our servicemen.

—First time in history of congregation that the mission festival offerings exceeded a thousand dollars. . . . Authorization given to purchase some new school seats for use by upper grade and confirmation class pupils. . . . New mimeograph bought.

1946—Our congregation encouraged the Lutheran Missionary Association of Ft. Wayne and Vicinity to begin work among the Negroes by calling a special missionary for that purpose. The 20th anniversary of the Ladies' Aid was observed, the husbands also attending. . . . A committee was named to investigate the possibility and cost of installing toilet facilities in school. . . . The congregation and its organizations joined individuals in various relief projects to aid needy people in war-ravaged lands. A power lawn-mower was bought. . . . The Pastor was aided toward the purchase of a new car. . . . The work-list is to be named alphabetically. . . . Since 60 children had enrolled in school, it was resolved to obtain the services of a second parish school teacher. No male candidates were available when the teaching calls were assigned, but Miss Rhea West of St. John's College, Winfield, Kans., was engaged to teach the three primary grades beginning with the new school term in September, 1947.

1947—Midweek Lenten services henceforth to be conducted in the English language exclusively. . . . Our thankoffering on the occasion of Synod's 100th anniversary was \$1,100 plus. . . . It was decided to remodel the school to provide two class rooms, new instruction class room, and library. Steps leading to basement



School Days Four Decades Ago

were re-located to make room for a kitchen in the basement. The Ladies' Aid paid for all equipment of the kitchen. . . . Several rooms in parsonage received oak floors.

A special "Welcome Home Service and Banquet" to honor our returned servicemen was held on Sunday night, May 25th, with Chaplain W. J. Schnedler speaking. The congregation presented a leather gift to each of the 21 servicemen of World War II. Special recognition was given to Lester Gick, who made the supreme sacrifice. Those who entered the service of our country while members of our congregation were: Henry Burkamp, Erwin Franke, Melvin Franke, Robert Franke, Martin Hegerfeld, Robert Hegerfeld, Paul Herderhorst, Gerald Hisner, Gordon Hisner, Parnell Hisner, Rowland Hisner, Vernon Hockemeyer, Frederick Hoffmann, Richard Hoffmann, Lester Gick, Arthur Kaiser, August Kaiser, Robert Koenemann, Gilbert Neff, Carl Zimmerman, and William Zimmerman.

Following the educational service on August 31, a basket dinner and reception was held to welcome the new lady teacher, Miss West. . . . The parsonage kitchen porch was enclosed with glass. . . . Water-softeners and electric water-heaters were placed in both residences. It was resolved that, beginning with December, English services and Sunday School should be held every Sunday of the year, also on Sundays when German Communion services are conducted. . . . The deacons donated four new offering plates.

1948—On Jan. 11th the Walther League observed its 25th anniversary with a special service, followed by a banquet. . . . All buildings of the congregations were painted. . . . Three dozen additional folding chairs were purchased for church use. . . . The pastor's Silver Jubilee in the office of the holy ministry was fittingly observed with a surprise celebration on Sunday morning, August 8. Festival preachers were Pastor A. C. Scholz and Visitor E. T. Schmidtke. A congregational dinner, presentation of gifts, and program followed in school basement.

The congregation granted permission to extend the time between Sunday morning services in order to conduct regular Adult Bible Class instruction in church. The organization

of the Adult Bible Class was effected on Reformation Day with an enrollment of 135 charter members. . . . The church choir was re-organized in November. . . . Donations were made toward the teacher's new car. . . . A special offering on Christmas Day averted a threatened deficit of \$1,700 in the congregational treasury. . . . Participated in the CROP (Christian Rural Overseas Program) to send grain and food to needy people in Europe.

1949—In the January business meeting it was decided to provide more parking space on the church grounds and to construct a basketball court for the schoolchildren. A committee was chosen to solicit pledges from the members for the centennial thank-offering; authorization was given to engage an architect for the purpose of determining whether the present church building could be remodelled and enlarged at a reasonable cost; the resolution was adopted that the chief purpose of our thankoffering be the remodelling and enlargement of the church or, if such alteration be not advisable, to designate the money as a starting fund for the building of a new church. The goal for the anniversary year was set at \$30,000. . . . In a later meeting, after viewing the architect's sketches, it was decided to enlarge the church building but to wait until after the centennial celebration to decide when to begin the building project. The school toilets project was also to be included in the soliciting for pledges. (A few weeks later sentiment had changed overwhelmingly in favor of building a new church edifice rather than enlarging the present building). . . . A committee was selected to plan the enlargement of our cemetery. . . . *Mrs. Paul Herderhorst* was engaged to teach the primary grades beginning in the fall of this year to replace Miss Rhea West, who on June 5th became the bride of Mr. Richard Bohnke. . . . Teacher Ehlen and the pupils of the upper grades presented the operetta "Magic Gingerbread". . . . New tiling was voted to provide proper drainage for the parsonage basement and the latter was to be deepened and improved in various ways. . . . On June 18th the Ladies' Aid members and their families held a surprise celebration honoring the pastor and his wife on the occasion of their silver wedding anniversary. . . . Plans were completed for a worthy centennial observance.

• • • •

SACRED ACTS, 1849-1949

Baptisms, 740

Confirmations, 592

Marriages, 195

Burials, 268

• • • •

Of the 100 persons confirmed by the present pastor during the past ten years, 37 were adults.



Assembled Congregation. Photo taken between services on May 29, 1949. Approximately 80% of members were in attendance.



Air View of Our Property Looking South



Church and School

PARISH SCHOOL TEACHERS--Past and Present

*"...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you
always."*—St. Matthew 28:20.

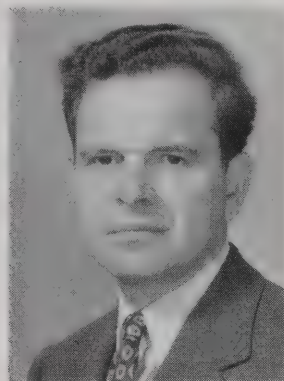
From the very beginning, our congregation has maintained a Christian day school. True enough, in the early years—in fact, for a number of decades—school was conducted under primitive conditions by the pastors, with none of our modern conveniences, yes with scarcely any teaching equipment or facilities. A century ago Pastor Husmann, whose parish consisted of four scattered congregations, would come to Flatrock riding horseback or driving a buggy to teach school here a day or two a week, as his time permitted, and occasion-

and blessed beyond many others, for they learned the "one thing needful" in addition to their instruction in the secular branches of learning, and they had opportunity to grow in Christian knowledge and to progress in sanctification. In spite of all handicaps, it was far better thus than to have received an education without the "fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom."

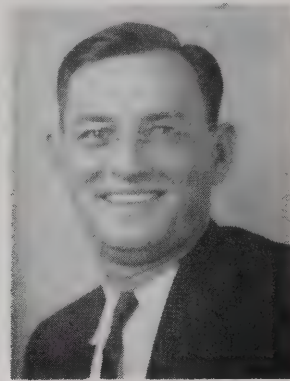


Wm. F. Toensing
(1907-1921)

ally an entire week would pass without any school instruction whatever; later on (until the first trained teacher was called in 1907), our children attended the parish school three days a week and some attended the nearby public school on the other two days of the week. Certainly, not an ideal or satisfactory situation; but it was all that could be done under the circumstances of those early days (we do not mean to imply that it was absolutely necessary to wait with the calling of a teacher until after the turn of the century), and the children of our school were nevertheless fortunate

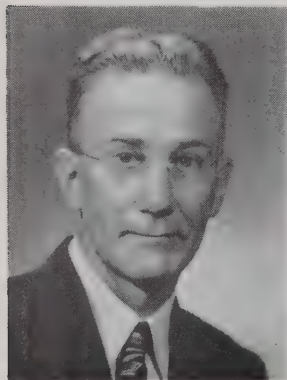


Oscar P. Rausch
(1927-1937)



R. M. Schumann
(1937-1943)

Elsewhere we have briefly recorded the calling of Mr. William Toensing as the first full-time teacher of our Christian day school in 1907 and also named his successors in office since that time. A real stride forward was taken when the congregation resolved to conduct a two-teacher school and in 1947 engaged a lady teacher to teach the three lower grades. Our increased enrollment as well as our de-



Fred W. Uffelman
(1922-1925)



Theo. Kuhdart
(1925-1926)



W. J. Ehlen
(Since 1944)

sire to give the children of our school the best possible instruction and training, made that memorable step necessary. The wisdom and blessing of that move is clearly apparent.

May God continue to bestow His blessings upon all institutions of Christian learning, particularly also upon our day school.

"He saith unto him, Feed My lambs."

—St. John 21:15

We add a few stanzas penned by Pastor G. H. Hentschel of Hobart, Indiana:

The school can be an anteroom
Of Church on earth and Church above,
From which, year after year, will come
The increase of God's bounteous love.
It is an aid to Christian homes:
It trains for service in this life
And for the life beyond the tombs,
Where victory replaces strife.
Move us, O Lord, schools to maintain
Where not the intellect alone
Of children, but their heart we train;
And faith, not reason holds the throne.
Lord Jesus Christ, Thou children's Friend,
Whose blood their garments washes white,
Upon our school Thy blessings shed!
Protect it, Savior, by Thy might!



St. John's School



Teacher's Residence



Rhea West
(1947-1949)



Mrs. Paul Herderhorst
(Since 1949)



Pastor Gotsch and School Children, ca. 1890



Pastor Diederich and Pupils



Two Views of Teacher Toensing and School Children



Teacher Uffelman and Pupils



Pastor Gerken and Pupils



Teacher Rausch and School Children



Grades 4-8, 1949



Grades 1-3, 1949



Miss West, speaking



Teacher Ehlen in Action

1949 PICNIC SCENES



Sunday School, Jr. Bible Class, and Teachers

SUNDAY SCHOOL

In 1926 the Sunday instruction of the young in the form of *Christenlehre* was supplemented by the organization of a Sunday School conducted in the English language. At first the sessions were held on Sunday evenings in connection with the bi-weekly English services, while *Christenlehre* in German was conducted for about 15 minutes between the morning services, chiefly for the benefit of the children's classes confirmed during the preceding two years. Among the pioneer Sunday School teachers were: Herman Grotrian, Arthur David, Mrs. Wm. J. Hoffman, Mrs. Wade Tyler, Harold Melcher, and Mrs. Charles Reynolds.

At the beginning of Rev. Hartenberger's pastorate the Sunday School was reorganized and enlarged until it included all the various departments from the Beginners' Class to Junior Bible Class. The Cradle Roll department was added in 1940 for all baptized children of the congregation too young to attend the Beginners' Class. At present 30 children are enrolled. Membership in the other departments is as follows: Beginners, 15; Primary, 16; Junior, 21; Intermediate, 21; Senior, 5; Junior Bible Class, 18. Present instructors include: Mrs. Lawrence Bohnke, Miss Dorothy Kaiser, Mrs. Martin Molthan, Mrs. W. J. Ehlen, Arlis Ehlen, Miss Betty Hockemeyer, Albert Grotrian, Eric Hoffman, Mr. and

Mrs. Richard Bohnke, Mrs. H. W. Hartenberger. Substitute teachers: Mrs. Rudolph Koenemann, Mrs. Eric Hoffman, Richard Hoffman, Melvin Franke, Howard Molthan, and Mrs. W. J. Hoffman, and Mrs. Ray Grotrian, Cradle Roll Superintendent. All classes of the Sunday School meet simultaneously with the Adult Bible Class between the morning services, also during the summer months. The Sunday School's centennial gift to the congregation took the form of a beautiful new leather volume of THE LUTHERAN LITURGY.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it."

—Proverbs 22:6



Cradle Roll Children and Mothers



Adult Bible Class

ADULT BIBLE CLASS

Regular and systematic Bible study on the adult level, except for that done at the meetings of the Walther League and Ladies' Aid Society, is of quite recent origin at Flatrock. An Adult Bible Class was organized in 1942 and met on Sunday evenings to study the Gospel according to St. Mark; but when the attendance dwindled to a handful of people, the class disbanded less than two years later. Inability to agree on a suitable time, rather than lack of interest in the study of Holy Writ, appears to have been the chief deterrent to the formation of a successful adult Bible class heretofore.

The impetus to the organization of the present group of Bible students was given in the fall of last year by the request of the Walther League, drawn up in the form of a resolution and presented to the congregation, to have regular Sunday morning Bible Class study between services for all communicant members not already attending the Sunday School and Junior Bible Class. Since a change in time of the second morning service was involved, the matter was discussed by the Voters' Assembly and the recommendation was made to obtain the sentiment of all adults by holding a special meeting of the entire congregation. Preceding the meeting on Sunday, Oct. 10th, Pastor Hartenberger preached a sermon on the theme, "Search the Scriptures," following which the matter was again discussed and a favorable vote resulted. A committee comprising the presidents of the Voters' Assembly,

Ladies' Aid Society, and the Walther League (Rudolph Koenemann, Mrs. Lawrence Bohnke, and Howard Molthan) aided the pastor in formulating plans for the organization of the Adult Bible Class.

The new Bible Class was organized on Reformation Day, Oct. 31, 1948, and when the charter membership list was closed on Thanksgiving Day, a total of 135 confirmed members had enrolled. The present membership stands at 150. Officers are: Harold Melcher, pres.; Richard Hoffman, v. p.; Mrs. Hilbert Holle, sec'y and Mrs. Paul Melcher, assistant sec'y.; Melvin Franke, treasurer, and Verna Jane Hockemeyer, assistant treasurer.

At present the Class meets Sunday mornings from 10 - 10:30, the pastor and teacher alternating as leaders. The first few sessions were devoted to the discussion of the Bible, its general make-up and contents, following which the Book of Acts was begun. Discussions are informal; business matters are held to a minimum; freewill offerings are taken. The attendance has averaged about 120. The centennial gift is to be a wire or tape recorder.

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."—St. John 8:31

How precious is the Book Divine,
By inspiration giv'n!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine
To guide our souls to heav'n.



Group of Walther Leaguers

WALTHER LEAGUE

Our Flatrock League was organized July 16, 1920 as "The Lutheran Young People's Society of St. John's". First officers were: Wm. Toensing, chairman; Jacob Neff, v. ch.; Arthur Fackler, sec'y; Loretta Melcher, treas. The Constitution was drafted by Pastor Gerken, Teacher Toensing, and Arthur Fackler. Meetings were held monthly; dues, 10c per month. The program of first regular meeting included: Bible study, dialogues, ciphering contest, speech by a member, group singing, and talk by the pastor. Here's a gem culled from the minutes of an early meeting: "Furthermore it was agreed upon to buy a drinking cup, as most of us thought we needed one at the well." Also this notation: "Minutes of the September meeting were lost in Michigan."

The Y. P. S. joined the Walther League on Dec. 6, 1922. Officers at that time were: Arthur Fackler, pres.; Edna Grotrian, v. p.; Frieda Hoffman, sec'y; Herman Grotrian, treas. Popular activities then were indoor baseball, spelling matches, debates, plays, showing slides on new machine, etc. First delegates to Indiana District convention were Arthur Fackler and Herman Grotrian; to International convention at Detroit: Rudolph Berning. The name of local league was changed to "St. John's Walther League" on October 3, 1923. Affiliated with Maumee Valley Zone in April, 1930, and first zone delegate was Rudolph Koenemann. Tenth anniversary was observed in 1930 with a banquet.

Our League is a combined Junior and Senior organization. Throughout the years it has carried out most of the Walther League projects, made

substantial donations to worthy causes, and aided the congregation in many endeavors.

More recent highlights included being host to the Zone Rally at Hoagland gym on Oct. 18, 1942 with a "V for Victory" banquet, and the observance of our League's 25th anniversary on Jan. 11, 1948, in a special church service, followed by a banquet. Centennial gifts to the congregation included beautiful lectern Bible and THE LUTHERAN AGENDA.

Present membership is 49. Present officers are: Calvin Hoffman, pres.; Selma Neff, v. p.; Margaret Grotrian, secy; Betty Hockemeyer, treas.; Richard Hoffman, Christian Growth chairman.

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men . . . for ye serve the Lord Christ."

Colossians 3:23



Victory Banquet Scene, Hoagland Gym



Ladies' Aid Group ("Martha-Mary Society")

LADIES' AID SOCIETY

"Ich bin nicht dagegen, aber ich bin auch nicht gerade dafuer" ("I'm not against it, but I'm not particularly in favor of it either")—thus Pastor Gerken allegedly exclaimed when approached by several Flatrock ladies suggesting that a sewing circle or other type of ladies' aid society be formed. Evidently the "dafuer" prevailed, for on March 5, 1926 a woman's organization came into being with about twenty charter members calling itself the "Martha-Mary Society."

The first officers were: Mrs. William Koenemann, pres.; Mrs. William Melcher, v. p.; Mrs. Carl Wiegman, sec'y; Mrs. Gottlieb Melcher, treasurer. The first meeting of the new society was held in the home of Mrs. Fred W. Bohnke, Jr.

Among the early rules and regulations were these: Meetings were to be held on the second Thursday of each month, dues 25c per month. Quilting was done for 50c per spool for members and 75c for non-members. The meetings were to be held at the homes of the members in alphabetical order. (A "fine" of \$5 was set for any member who served more than sandwiches, cake, pickles, fruit and coffee).

Our local ladies' society has been a member of the Martha Society at Concordia College since 1935 and of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (formerly Lutheran Women's Endeavor) since 1942; mite-box offerings for the L. W. M. L. have been about \$250 annually. The pastor regularly conducts devotional exercises and topic studies

at the monthly meetings. A series of lectures on Luther's Catechism extending over several years will be completed during this centennial year.

At five-year intervals the anniversaries of our active ladies' organization have been observed with appropriate ceremonies. The latest of the celebrations in 1946 was in the nature of a potluck supper in the school basement to which also the husbands of the members had been invited. The pastor led devotions and gave a brief address; members absent due to illness as well as those who had died were remembered by a moment of silence; an historical report was read; group singing, games and contests followed.

It would require altogether too much space to enumerate even a representative portion of the aid—financial and otherwise—which our "Aid" has rendered the congregation and the church at large during the years of its existence (a few are mentioned here and there in another part of this booklet); a conservative estimate of cash gifts and contributions is \$7,000. The centennial project is to provide the carpeting for our new church-to-be.

Present membership is 63. Officers are: Mrs. Lawrence Bohnke, pres.; Mrs. Wm. H. Hoffman, v. p.; Mrs. W. J. Ehlen, sec'y; Mrs. Hilbert Holle, treasurer.

"A woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised."

Proverbs 31:30



The Flatrock Local of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League
Practically all women of the congregation belong to the L. W. M. L. The quarterly topics are discussed. Mite-box offerings are systematically gathered by a dozen "captains," who report quarterly to Mrs. Ada Hoffman, Secretary-treasurer.



PRESENT CHURCH COUNCIL

Left to right, back row: Ed. Gallmeyer, Walter Melcher, W. F. Hockemeyer,
W. J. Ehlen, Oscar Koenemann, Arthur Hoffman
Front row: Ray Stoppenhagen, Rev. Hartenberger, Rudolph Koenemann,
Reinhard Franke, Edwin Herderhorst, Hilbert Holle

"For ye serve the Lord Christ."

—Colossians 3:24



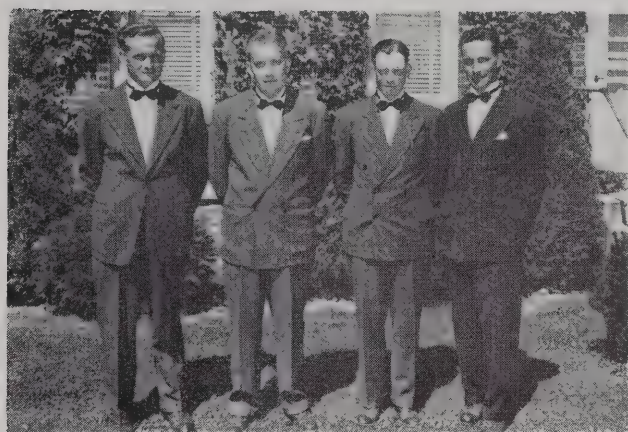
Adult Confirmation Class, 1948



"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving"—Psalm 100:4



"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness"—Psalm 29:2



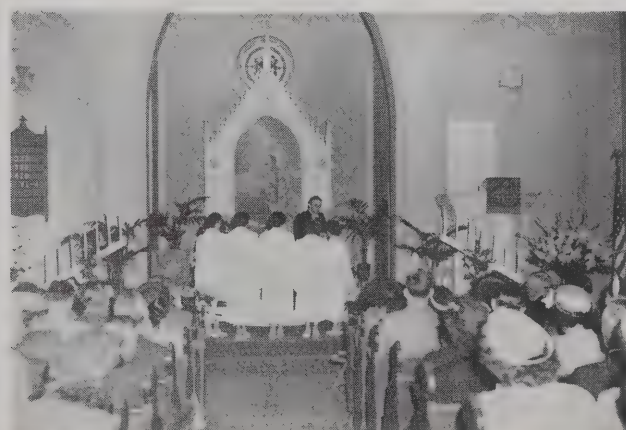
"Serve the Lord with gladness"—Psalm 100:2



"...and rejoice at the sound of the organ."—Job 21:12



"Suffer the little children to come unto Me."—St. Mark 10:14



"This do in remembrance of Me."—I Corinthians 11:24



"My son, give Me thine heart."—Proverbs 23:26



Centennial Class (Adults)

Centennial Class (Juniors)



"Be thou faithful unto death."—Revelation 2:10



"Make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered."—Isaiah 23:16



Group of Choir Members



"What therefore God hath joined together"—St. Matt. 19:6



Mrs. Wm. Molthan, 94, oldest member, who was confirmed eighty years ago, attending annual confirmation reunion



Herman Hockemeyer, Sr., 89, who with Adam Ehling, was confirmed 75 years ago.

*"Even to your old age
I am he; and even to hoar
hairs I will carry you."*

—Isaiah 46:4



*"The Lord hath done
great things for us; where-
of we are glad."*

—Psalm 126:3

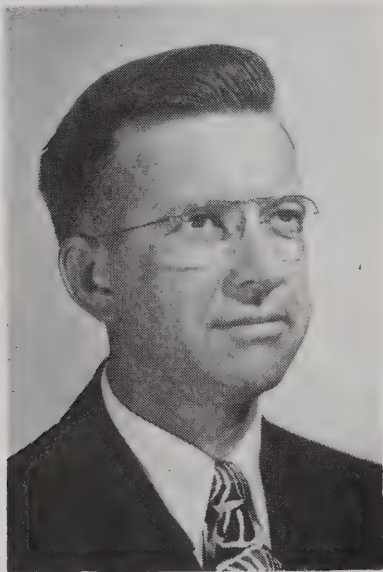
Mr. and Mrs. Adam Ehling, oldest living couple, happily married for 68 years



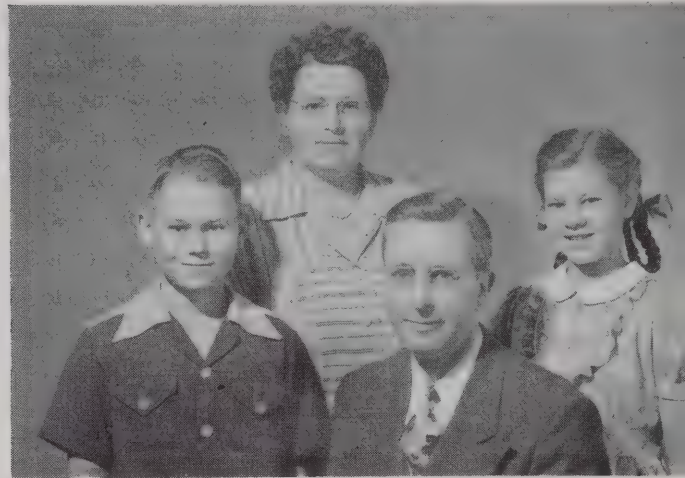
The Parsonage



Centennial Planning Committee
Left to right: W. J. Ehlen, Lawrence Bohnke,
Pastor Hartenberger, Harold Melcher, Rudolph Koenemann



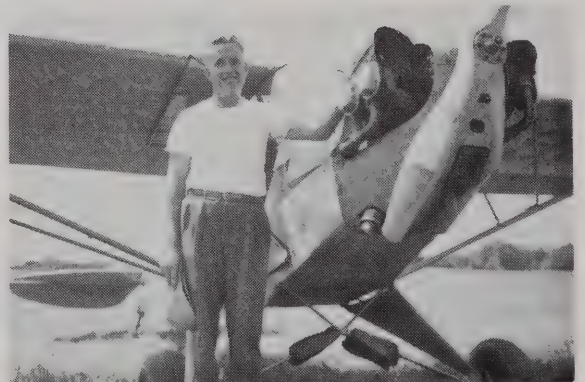
Wade Tyler, whose skill and generosity contributed three dozen photos for this centennial book.



Present Occupants of Parsonage



Top Centennial Dinner Committee
Left to right: Mrs. L. Herderhorst, Mrs. O. Knipstein,
Mrs. H. Molthan, Mrs. W. Neff, Mrs. R. Hockemeyer



Hilbert Holle and Plane he piloted to get aerial photos

A FEW "FIRSTS"

The first worship service held by the congregation after its founding was conducted on Sunday, Oct. 21, 1849.

The first elected officers of the congregation were: Conrad Frey, elder; Carl Wiebke, deacon; Philip Neff, trustee.

"Bielefeld" was the first colloquial name by which our congregation and community were called.

The first Communion service was held on Dec. 9, 1849, with seven men and 6 women receiving the Sacrament.

Mrs. Catherine Hoffmeier is listed as the first member of the newly-founded congregation to receive private Communion on July 23, 1850.

The first baptism recorded in the church records was that of Henry Brouwer, son of Mr. & Mrs. Juergen Brouwer, born June 26, 1849 and baptized Aug. 19th. However, the first to be baptized after the congregation had been organized were Wilhelmina Elisa, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Moldthan (born Sept. 22) and Margaretha, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Marquard (born March 9), both of whom received Holy Baptism in the first regular service on Oct. 21.

The first recorded confirmation of a children's class was held before the assembled congregation on May 4, 1851. Members of the class were: Henry Wiebke, John Marquard, Barbara Frey, and Magdalena Marquard.

First marriage on record is that of Fred Hillmann and Dorothea Schwiering on May 8, 1851.

The first funeral service conducted after the congregation had been established was held on Sept. 22, 1852 for Jacob Marquard, who died on Sept. 21.

The first resident pastor was the Rev. H. G. Bauer in 1866, the first resident teacher was Wm. F. Toensing in 1907.

Regular Sunday morning services in English (once a month) were first held in 1919 by Pastor Gerken; "double-header" services (English and German every Sunday morning) were begun in 1937 by Pastor Aker.

The first English version of the congregation's Constitution and By-laws was drawn up in 1939. In that year also the first weekly church bulletin was published.

The first annual Roll Call and Confirmation Reunion service was held on Palm Sunday evening in 1940.

The first full-time lady teacher to serve in our parish school was Mrs. Rhea West Bohnke, who began teaching in the fall of 1947.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

Dear Brethren in Christ:—

The centennial celebration of your congregation is a singular day of rejoicing and spiritual stimulation. St. John's having been founded shortly after the formation of the Missouri Synod, your thoughts readily turn back a hundred years to the earnest efforts of your forefathers to have and to hold in the new world, for themselves and for their children, the church of their Lutheran faith, rooted in God's holy word and reflected in the Lutheran confessions.

For the manifold benedictions which have so visibly and richly rested upon the Gospel ministry in your congregation, for the continuing evidence of heavenly grace in your Christian fellowship and for the sure hope of God's promises unto salvation for the days that lie ahead, you now, with grateful hearts and jubilant lips intone the psalming words of old: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

On behalf of our Central District, I congratulate you on this day of jubilee and pray that God's great blessings may abide with you.

With every good wish,

Faternally yours,

J. H. Meyer, District President

Lakewood, Ohio

* * * *

Dear Fellow Lutherans:

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on the glorious occasion of your congregation's Centennial.

I want to join you in rendering praise and thanksgiving to our good Heavenly Father for the gracious blessings which He showered upon your congregation throughout the hundred years now brought to a close. During these many years God has granted your fathers and you the indescribable blessing of Gospel preaching in its fullest truth and purity and of the correct administration of the blessed Sacraments according to Christ's institution. Through these means of grace thousands were influenced and blessed for time and for eternity. Truly you have every reason to thank and praise the Lord for His manifold blessings.

May God continue to shower His divine benedictions upon pastors, teachers and people also in the future! May He permit your congregation to be a genuine blessing to all members and to many other blood-bought souls who enter within your gates! May your celebration move all members to ever deeper gratitude and to ever greater determination to render wholehearted service unto Christ in the home congregation, in the district, and in the Church-at-large!

Yours in Christ,

J. W. Behnken, D. D.,

President of Synod

Oak Park, Ill.

CENTENNIAL JUBILEE SERVICES

Sunday,

October 2, 1949 at 9:30 a. m. The Rev. Theo. Gerken, pastor of Salem Church, St. Louis, Mo. guest speaker.

October 2, 1949 at 10:30 a. m. The Rev. August Gerken, pastor of Saint Thomas Church, Ohio City, Ohio, festival speaker (German)

October 2, 1949 at 3:00 p. m. The Rev. E. S. Husmann, pastor of Concordia Church, Dayton, Ohio, anniversary speaker.

Wednesday,

October 5, 1949 at 7:30 p. m. The Rev. Rupert Uffelman, pastor of Redeemer Church, South Bend, Ind., guest speaker.

The Liturgist—Pastor H. W. Hartenberger

The Organist and Choir Director—Teacher W. J. Ehlen

The Guest Organists—Wm. F. Toensing and Herbert Toensing, St. Louis, Mo. and Theodore Grotrian, R. 3, Decatur, Ind.

NOTE: The Sunday afternoon service will emphasize Christian education in its various forms. The service on Wednesday night will take special note of our church organizations, specifically the Ladies' Aid and Walther League.

"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

—Numbers 10:28

In Memoriam

God's Acre

Be still, O heart!

Beneath the sky

Our loved ones lie.

Beneath the grass so soft and green;

Beneath the outstretched arms of evergreen—

The Tree of Life.

Beneath the ever-changing skies;

Beneath the loving eyes

Of Him who died for them,

Our loved ones lie.

Be comforted!

• Above the mounds

Where loved ones lie

Are sun and moon and stars so bright;

God's angels in the realms of everlasting light;

And He who said: "Be not afraid!

Come unto Me and rest!

Sown as a seed in weakness. Raised in power.

Come, be forever blest.

I am the Resurrection and the Life.

Be comforted!

I watch above the sky

Where your loved ones lie."

Little Valley, N. Y.

ELSIE B. SANDER

This bit of space is dedicated to those who once lived and labored in our midst, who worshiped and served Christ with us in this church, but who have gone to their heavenly reward.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth."—Revelation 14:13



God's Acre at Flatrock



Our Final Goal

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. . . . Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest."—Hebrews 4: 9, 11

*There is a home for weary souls,
By sin and sorrow driv'n,—
When tossed on life's tempestuous shoals,
When storms arise and ocean rolls,
And all is drear—but heav'n.*

*There faith lifts up the tearless eye
To brighter prospects giv'n,
And views the tempests passing by,
The evening shadows quickly fly,
And all serene—in heav'n.*

LET THY BLESSING REST UPON US

*Let Thy blessing rest upon this church, O Lord.
Out from the by-roads, out from the care-filled days
We come, an earnest throng, to hear Thy word,
To offer Thee our sincere, heartfelt praise.
We come to seek Thy steadfast guiding power,
We come to lay our burdens at Thy feet;
We seek the calming quiet of this hour
Away from the clamoring throng, the crowded street.
Let Thy blessing rest upon this church, we pray,
Upon a people in their vital need;
Be Thou our helper, be our guide and stay,
And be our wine, the bread on which we feed.
Lord God, for every church in every land,
We crave a blessing from Thy mighty hand.*

—GRACE NOLL CROWELL

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST CULLED FROM OLD RECORDS FOUND
~~FOUND~~ AFTER THE CENTENNIAL BOOKLET WAS IN PRINT. (Paste in last page
of booklet)

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- 1872 - It was resolved to have quarterly voters' meetings henceforth.
- 1880 - Pastor Karrer preached his farewell sermon on August 29th. During the vacancy Rev. Zschoche served the congregation.
- 1882 - Permission was granted to Rev. Berg of Fuelling Settlement to preach English occasionally on Sunday afternoons.
 - First mention made of a Christmas tree in church and children's service held on Christmas Eve.
- 1883 - The rule regarding age of confirmation was interpreted that: those to be confirmed had to be 14 years old the previous Jan. 1.
 - On March 11th the resolution was adopted to build a new school. The Committee named to investigate how much more a brick building would cost than a frame consisted of: Michael Fackler, H. Wiebke, W. Franke W. Hockemeyer.
 - A collection was lifted for flood victims.
- 1884 - Shade trees were planted at Church. Old church was dismantled.
- 1886 - Present parsonage was built and cistern and pump installed.
- 1890 - Resolved to lay tile on church grounds.
- 1891 - Committee was elected to investigate the possibility of running water from parsonage basement into big ditch south of property.
- 1893 - Picket fence erected in front of church. Resolved to lay a brick walk to road from parsonage (not carried out until 1897).
- 1895 - A woodshed was built at parsonage for estimated cost of \$100.
 - Pastor Gotsch submitted his resignation because of advanced age. He was granted a release on April 28th and later Rev. Diederich was called.
 - Wm. Grotrian was hired as janitor. His duties included cleaning church and school, heating both buildings, ringing church bell daily at noon as well as for services, pumping the organ, etc. - all for \$25 a year.
- 1896 - Pine trees and fruit trees were planted in front yard of parsonage, also shade trees at school. - A summer kitchen was built for \$150. - Gravel was hauled on church property.
- 1900 - Resolved to dig a well on church property, 2-inch pipes to be used. A kitchen porch was added to parsonage, also stone steps at front.
- 1902 - It was decided to have also an English sermon at the mission festival to be held in Herman Franke's woods.
 - Pledges were taken from our members toward the building of a Lutheran hospital in Fort Wayne.
- 1903 - The matter of calling a day school teacher was discussed, but no action was taken. - A new barn (painted red) was built. Cost was \$348.86. The rail fences along south and west side of school grounds were replaced with wire fences. - A new church clock was to be purchased.
- 1904 - Poultry shed of tile blocks to be built for pastor's chickens. The trustees were instructed to repair hole burnt in church floor. - The mission festival services were to be held in church this year.

Note: Due to a slip on the part of the printer a line of type was used twice in the early historical account on page 6 of the centennial booklet. The error was made in the second column of that page, in the 15th line of type above the picture of the title page of the first

(over)

record book. The same type used 7 lines further up was inadvertently inserted here again. The corrected sentence should read: "Mrs. Brouwer's maiden name was Frey, and four sons are listed up to 1849, namely: George, Jacob, Martin, and Henry."

